

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for performing a surgical procedure with a robotic surgical system comprising:
- providing a plurality of surgical instrument assemblies each comprising a wrist unit having a shaft with a proximal end and a distal wrist, and an instrument coupled to the distal wrist;
  - connecting the proximal end of the wrist unit shaft of one of the surgical instrument assemblies to a manipulator arm; and
  - introducing the instrument of said one of the surgical instrument assemblies to a treatment site on a patient with the manipulator arm.
2. The method of claim 1 further comprising removing the instrument of said one of the surgical instrument assemblies from the treatment site and disconnecting the proximal end of the wrist unit shaft of said one of the surgical instrument assemblies from the manipulator arm.
3. The method of claim 1 further comprising connecting the proximal end of the wrist unit shaft of another one of the surgical instrument assemblies to the manipulator arm, and introducing the instrument of said another one of the surgical instrument assemblies to the treatment site with the manipulator arm.
4. The method of claim 1 further comprising pivoting the instrument about the distal wrist of the wrist unit shaft.
5. The method of claim 1 further comprising:
- shielding the manipulator arm from the treatment site with a sterile drape;
  - attaching a sterile adaptor to the manipulator arm through the sterile drape;
  - and
  - attaching the proximal end of the wrist unit shaft of said one of the surgical instrument assemblies to the sterile adaptor.